(c) Indian Missions abroad have been instructed that the welfare of people of Indian origin is an important responsibility and they should maintain effective and close liaison with their host Government to protect the interests and welfare of people of Indian origin.

Sri Lankan refugees in Tamil Nadu

172. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that more than one lakh Sri Lankan Tamil refugees are living in various camps of Tamil Nadu and the Sri Lankan Government has not taken any steps so far the return of the Sri Lankan Tamils; and

(b) what steps Government are taking for the return of Sri Lankan Tamils of Sri Lanka?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) As on 30th June, 1992, 89,332 Sri Lankan refugees were staying in various camps in Tamil Nadu. Following agreement between India & Sri Lanka, the repatriation of Sri Lankan refugees to their country was started on 20th January, 1992, based on their willingness to return and on assurances for their safety, security and appropriate rehabilitation arrangement by the Government of Sri Lanka. A total of 23,125 refugees were repatriated by sea & air upto 15th May, 1992. The repatriation process will be resumed as soon as whether conditions improve.

बंगला देश के प्रधान मंत्री की भारत यात्रा

173. डा० बापू कालदाते :
श्री कृष्णकुमार बिरला :

क्या प्रधान मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) बंगला देश के प्रधान मंत्री की भारत यात्रा के दौरान किन-किन मामलों पर बातचीत की गई ;

(ख) कौन-कौन से मामलों पर आम सहमति बनी ;

(ग) तीन बीघा के बारे में दोनों देशों द्वारा क्या निर्णय किया गया है ;

(घ) चकमा शरणार्थियों के संबंध में बंगलादेश की प्रधान मंत्री का क्या रवैया रहा ;

(ङ) चकमा शरणार्थियों को वापस स्वदेश भेजने के बारे में सरकार द्वारा क्या बातचीत की गई ; और

(च) इन शरणार्थियों को कब तक उनके देश में वापस भेजा जाएगा ?

विदेश मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री आर०एल० भाटिया) : (क) और (ख) अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय और बहु पक्षीय मामलों के अतिरिक्त नदी जल विभाजन, गैर कानूनी आप्रवासन तथा आर्थिक और सांस्कृतिक क्षेत्रों में सहयोग जैसे द्विपक्षीय मामलों पर चर्चा हुई। परस्पर हित के द्विपक्षीय और बहुपक्षीय क्षेत्रों में सहयोग बढ़ाने पर एक व्यापक सहमति हुई ।

(ग) तीन बीघा करार की शर्तों के अंतर्गत 26 जून, 1992 को बंगला देश राष्ट्रिकों के प्रयोग के लिए तीन बीघा कारीडोर खोल दिया गया ।

(घ) और (ङ) दोनों प्रधान मंत्री इस बात पर सहमत हुए कि चकमा शरणार्थियों को पूर्ण सुरक्षा और हिफाजत के साथ वापस बंगलादेश भेजने की तेजी से व्यवस्था की जाए । बंगलादेश पक्ष राजनैतिक स्तर की एक प्रतिनिधिक समिति के गठन पर सहमत हुआ, जो शरणार्थियों को वापस जाने के लिए उत्साहित करेगी ।

(च) प्रत्यावासन प्रक्रिया को पूरा करने के लिए कोई तारीख निर्धारित नहीं की गई है ।

Pending passport applications

174. SHRI S. MADHAVAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that lakhs of applications for passports are pending

for disposal, and if so, what are the details thereof;

(b) whether it is a fact that students, businessmen and newly married brides going abroad for studies urgent trips and to join with their husbands respectively find it difficult to get their passports;

(c) if so, what are the steps taken to help such categories of applicants;

(d) whether the power of the Regional Passport Officers to issue passports out of turn was taken away recently and those cases were being sent to the Chief Passport Officer at Delhi; and

(e) whether Government would ask the Regional Passport Officers to dispose the applications of students, business people and the spouses married to foreign citizens on a priority basis?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) There are around 12 lakh applications currently pending in 22 Passoport Offices in India.

(b) and (c) No, Sir, The Heads of Passport Office have full discretion to issue passports on out of turn and priority basis provided they are satisfied that the documentation submitted by the applicant justify their request for priority issue of passport.

(d) and (e) Yes, Sir. The discretion to issue passports on out of turn basis which has been taken away from the Heads of Passport Offices has been restored to them subject to their satisfying themselves on the basis of documentation submitted by the applicant that the request for issue of passport on out of turn basis is fully justified.

Fishing rights under Indo—Sri Lanka agreement around Kachchativu

175. SHRI ARANGIL SREEDHARAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that Indian fishermen in Ramanathapuram District, Tamil Nadu, want to have fishing rights assured in and around Kachchativu under the Indo-Sri Lankan Agreement of 1974;

(b) whether Government are aware of the fact that these fishermen depend upon these fishing rights for their livelihood; and

(c) whether there is any proposal to negotiate with Sri Lankan Government to get back the traditional fishing right of our fishermen guaranteed under the 1974 Agreement?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) to (c) The Government are aware of the requirement of Indian fishermen to enjoy their traditional rights in and around the Kachchativu Island, under the Maritime Boundary Agreements between India & Sri Lanka. The Government is examining the modalities by which the extant traditional rights of Indian fishermen in the area can be exercised, without infringing upon the legalities of Indo-Sri Lanka Maritime Boundary Agreements.

Discussion on Tin Bigha Issue with Bangladesh P.M.

176. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government had discussed the quastion of renegotiating the agreement on the Tin Bigha issue with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh during her visit to India in May, 1992;

(b) whether Government brought to the notice of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the various problems arising out of the transfer of Tin Bigha to Bangladesh;

(c) if so, what are the details of the discussions and the results thereof;

(d) what was the reaction of the Prime Minister of Bangladesh in this regard; and

(e) the number of Bangladeshis who came to India during each of the last three years and what is their present number as on 1st April, 1992?